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SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE. NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/PASCUAL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/28/2018  
TAGS: [KWBG](#) [PBTS](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [IS](#)  
SUBJECT: MASKIYOT PREPARES TO EXPAND

REF: A. JERUSALEM 1343  
[1](#)B. JERUSALEM 1235

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: PolOff visited Maskiyot July 29 to review the site where the GOI recently approved construction of twenty houses for settler evacuees from Gaza. The plots are located where the GOI initiated and stopped construction in 2006, which is approximately 400 meters southeast of Maskiyot and outside the settlement's current footprint. Once completed, the houses will double the current land mass and number of houses at Maskiyot located deep in the Jordan Valley, well beyond the separation barrier and far from the major settlement blocs. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) On July 29, PolOff revisited the northern Jordan Valley settlement of Maskiyot where the GOI recently approved twenty new houses designated for settlers evacuated from Gaza in 2005. Several of these families have been living in caravans illegally placed at Maskiyot in February (reftel). PolOff walked the area allotted for the twenty newly approved houses. The area is on a hilltop approximately 400 meters southeast of Maskiyot's existing perimeter, where new housing construction was approved and later cancelled by then-MOD Amir Peretz in 2006. PolOff observed one existing foundation and five other plots where rebar installations remain from the 2006 construction. The completion of the twenty new houses will approximately double the land mass and number of houses currently at Maskiyot. According to Jordan Valley Regional Council Chairman Dubi Tal, the area is state land that the GOI considers legally "zoned" for Maskiyot.

[1](#)3. (C) Tal told PolOff July 29 that he thinks MOD Barak "had no choice but to approve the new houses" after Tal had threatened legal action against the GOI in support of settlers evacuated from Gaza. (Note: Per reftel, Tal wrote Israeli Attorney General Menachem Mazuz threatening legal action, if he was not permitted to build for them at Maskiyot). Tal told PolOff that he believes the decision was related to the GOI's negotiations with settlers on outpost removals. Yesha Council Chairman Dani Dayan denied this connection to PolOff (reftel).

[1](#)4. (C) PolOff met July 29 with Maskiyot settler Avi Nadav, who was evacuated from Gaza in 2005 and has lived in one of six caravans at Maskiyot since February. Nadav was pleased by the approval of the new homes, which he said the GOI would fund the homes and he would rent one.

WALLES